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SUBJECT: 63RD UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: UNITED STATES GOALS AND
PRIORITIES

REF: 08 STATE 93981

11. (SBU) The upcoming General Debate of the 63rd UN General Assembly (UNGA), September 23 - October 1, and regular session, which continues through December, will provide a platform for the advancement of key U.S. interests. We will use the high-level ministerial meetings Secretary-General Ban is hosting and additional multilateral and bilateral meetings surrounding the UNGA General Debate to advance priorities on democracy and human rights and on regional issues including Georgia, Kosovo, Burma, Iran, Sudan/Darfur, and the Middle East, and to demonstrate U.S. leadership on the issues of development and food security.

12. (SBU) During the remainder of the regular session of UNGA we will press for other U.S. priorities, such as human rights, UN reform including reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC), and improved voting coincidence within the UN General Assembly.

13. (SBU) In discussing U.S. priorities for UNGA with host governments, posts should draw from the following points as appropriate. In addition, background material on UNGA will be available on the following State Department Intranet site:
<http://p.state.sbu/sites/USUN/GA63/default.aspx>.

14. (SBU) Priority Issues for the UNGA General Debate:

a. Georgia: The U.S. condemns Russia's actions, including recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and re-states support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Even so, support for the successful introduction of a new resolution at UNGA to this effect does not look promising. Consultations on the margins of UNGA would provide a good platform to seek strong statements on these issues, as well as a demand that Russia cooperate with OSCE, UN, and EU as the UN Observer Mission in Georgia's (UNOMIG) current mandate expires in October. Our discussions of UNOMIG's future should be directed toward the creation of an international peacekeeping mechanism that will serve as a foundation for a solution to the crisis in Georgia. We can expect these discussions to be challenging, given Russia's veto in the UNSC and its entrenched position in Georgia. Our efforts should also seek to garner strong international support for the findings and recommendations of the UN humanitarian fact-finding mission.

b. Middle East: The Secretary will participate in meetings of the Middle East Quartet and in bilateral

meetings with the Israeli and Palestinian delegations. Our efforts are directed at sustaining diplomatic support for the Annapolis process and the serious Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, as well as seeking increased international financial support for the Palestinian Authority government under President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad. We urge UN Member States to oppose resolutions containing one-sided criticisms of Israel. Unbalanced resolutions do not contribute to peace, damage the serious yet delicate bilateral negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, and undermine the credibility of the UN.

c. Kosovo: Serbia has asked that the UNGA consider a resolution requesting an International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the question, "Is the unilateral declaration of independence by provisional institutions of self-government in Kosovo in accordance with international law?" The U.S. strongly opposes this resolution but is still considering how to prevent its passage without isolating the U.S. If, as expected, the UNGA General Committee places the resolution on the UNGA agenda, there would likely be a UNGA vote on the proposal later this fall. The ICJ's advisory opinion would not be legally binding, but it would likely carry significant weight internationally, and States and institutions may hesitate to recognize Kosovo or move forward on cooperation with Kosovo while the opinion is pending. Uncertainty also risks undermining the effectiveness of the Kosovo government, as well as of the UN and EU missions on the ground. Depending on what it says, the opinion could have an adverse impact beyond the Kosovo question, including, for example, by creating uncertainty in other states where secession and territorial integrity are under debate.

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d. Afghanistan: The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mandate is due to be renewed by October 13. Italy has proposed additional language in the preamble welcoming an ISAF role in upcoming national elections, steps to transfer authority on security issues to Afghan authorities, and re-establishment of the Tripartite Commission meetings comprising ISAF's, Afghanistan's, and Pakistan's military leadership. We support renewal of ISAF's mandate with this added language, and we will seek to balance any references in the text to the August 21 bombing incident in the Shindand district with condemnation of Taliban tactics that intentionally lead to increased civilian casualties. In addition, we will support a dramatic increase in the 2008 - 2009 UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) budget as UNAMA opens six new provincial offices. We also seek better donor coordination to improve economic development that can increase jobs and long-term stability.

e. Iran: UNGA provides a platform to further increase pressure on Iran consistent with the dual track strategy. We should seek public and private support for a fourth UNSC resolution imposing further sanctions on Iran. We should further stress the need for strong cross-regional support for an Iran human rights resolution in the Third Committee. This includes commitment from member states to oppose any no-action motion, which would end all debate on the human rights situation in Iran at this UNGA session. (NOTE: In 2007, the no-action motion on Iran failed by only a single vote. END NOTE.) Iran has not complied with UNSC resolutions 1737, 1747, and 1803, all of which mandate its suspension of proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities. Iran has not only failed to provide a clear, positive response to the refreshed P5+1 offer, but has also refused to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) investigation into its weaponization activities. Iran also continues severe restrictions on and violations of the rights of its people, which the international community must continue to

condemn. We should also stress that Iran could play a constructive role in Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, and Iraq by ending its lethal support to Hamas, Hizballah, and Iraqi insurgents.

f. Iraq: The President and the Iraqi delegation will co-host an event to thank Coalition partners and participants in the NATO training mission for their services in Iraq and to encourage them to continue their contributions in other missions. We expect high-level attendance at this event. In addition, we will continue to re-iterate our commitment to helping the Iraqi people achieve a democratic, stable, safe, and prosperous Iraq. We urge real and prompt steps to allow the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to implement its expanded mandate to engage Baghdad on issues important for political progress and national reconciliation, including: internally disputed boundaries; provincial elections; and regional engagement. We want to see progress on the building of a new UN compound, and we look forward to full Iraqi support, financially and otherwise, to this cause. The U.S. also offers and seeks public expressions of support for the International Compact and the Expanded Neighbors process and for those countries not present in Baghdad to enhance their diplomatic relations with Iraq. We will thank those countries who have joined us in contributing to the reduction of Iraq's debt burden, urge others to deliver on their previous pledges of debt reduction and financial and technical assistance, and press remaining creditors for positive statements on debt forgiveness.

g. Lebanon: While some parts of UNSC resolution 1701 have been implemented, we remain deeply concerned about weapons smuggling from Syria and the lack of progress in disarming Hizballah and other militias. The recent report of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team (LIBAT) indicated no progress in stemming the arms flow from Syria over the past two years. All provisions of resolution 1701 must be implemented. We strongly support the decision of Syria and Lebanon to establish full diplomatic relations and call for the speedy opening of Embassies in Beirut and Damascus. Parallel to that, the two countries should begin talks on the delineation of their border, including in the Sheba'a Farms area. We also urge all states to contribute to and support the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon.

h. Burma: Despite multiple visits by Secretary-General Ban's envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, the regime has yet to engage in a time-bound discussion with opposition leader Aung San

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Suu Kyi (ASSK). Likewise, it has made no progress on the release of ASSK or other political prisoners. The U.S. will coordinate with like-minded partners to refocus the UN's efforts on what we consider to be core matters (e.g., release of political prisoners) and away from issues not covered in the official mandate (e.g., possible assistance to Burmese electoral commission, possible participation in an economic forum). The EU plans to offer a resolution on Burma's human rights record in the Third Committee, which the U.S. fully supports. Gambari formally briefed the UN Security Council on September 11 on the outcome of his latest mission to Burma, despite continued opposition by Russia and China to addressing Burma in the UNSC and amid widespread sentiment that the Gambari mission has not been successful. "Next steps" are the likely subject of discussion at a Secretary-General-sponsored "Group of Friends of the Secretary-General on Burma" meeting, to be held at the Foreign Minister level on September 29.

i. Zimbabwe: We will continue to focus UNGA attention on the situation in Zimbabwe and implementation of the September 15 Agreement between the parties. The U.S. hopes the agreement provides an opportunity to put

Zimbabwe on the path to democratic reform and economic prosperity. If implemented, the agreement offers the people of Zimbabwe a chance to live in peace without fear of violence and intimidation. On March 29, the Zimbabwean people voted for a change. The election of an MDC Parliamentarian as Speaker of the Parliament is a step in that direction. Despite opposition by Russia and China to a UNSC resolution, neither have blocked Assistant Secretary General Haile Menkerios from briefing the Security Council on the status of the South African-led negotiations or the humanitarian situation in the country. After repeated diplomatic and NGO requests, the government finally lifted the ban on non-government organizations' and private voluntary organizations' field operations, but left itself an opening to shut down certain NGOs or activities as they review the documents NGOs must submit by the end of September. We are encouraged by the lifting of the ban but will watch cautiously to see if unfettered humanitarian access becomes a fact. We remain deeply concerned about ongoing human rights violations, systematic harassment of the opposition, and the dismantling of independent news media and the judiciary.

j. Sudan/Darfur: The U.S. continues to implement the President's \$100 million train and equip program for African UNAMID troops. Through this program we have trained and/or equipped an additional 4,500 troops. However, a combination of Government of Sudan obstacles, Troop Contributor reluctance, and UN Secretariat logistical constraints have blocked the rapid and effective deployment of these troops to Darfur. There is ample evidence that weapons and military equipment sold to Sudan by a number of countries continue to surface in Darfur. Several countries and organizations have proposed deferring ICC action against President Bashir under Article 16 of the Rome Statute via a UNSC resolution. The U.S. has not taken a position on the issue; however, we have signaled our support for accountability in Darfur.

k. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): USAID Administrator Henrietta Fore will participate in Secretary-General Ban's September 25 High-Level Event on the MDGs. The U.S. objective will be to emphasize our support for the core MDGs of reducing poverty and hunger, improving health and education, and combating major diseases, with the focus on sound strategies for both achieving and sustaining them. We will highlight our strong track record in supporting poverty eradication through sustained economic growth. Our approach to development is centered on good governance, pro-growth economic policies, investing in people, and addressing fragile and failing states in need of special assistance. At the same time, we will need to resist firmly a continuing effort within the UN to expand the scope of the MDGs (adding new targets and indicators) and to treat them as a proxy for effective development strategies, which need to be developed at the country level, rather than as global benchmarks. In particular, the U.S. continues to object to the recent assertion by the UN Secretariat of a new MDG target on "universal access to reproductive health," which has not been agreed to by UN Member States. We should redirect any misguided and unproductive debate over the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a percentage of GDP to a discussion of the full range of contributions to development, i.e., trade, investment, and other private capital flows which are far larger than ODA. By this "total economic engagement"

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measure, the U.S. leads the world in its contribution to development. (See STATE 47433 for additional background and guidance on the MDGs.)

1. Food Security: USAID will sponsor two food security side events on September 23 - one highlighting

partnerships to increase agricultural investment, which will include senior officials from government, universities, and the private sector, and the other advancing our dialogue on African-led agricultural development in Africa through a small roundtable with selected African heads of state, ministers, and leadership from the African Union. The U.S. is the world's largest food aid provider, and is meeting its G8 commitments and taking a leadership role on global food security through a three-part integrated strategy: 1) a robust, flexible humanitarian response; 2) urgent measures to increase agricultural production, productivity, and trade in developing countries; and 3) supporting trade liberalization and the use of advanced agricultural technologies, such as biotechnology, to address the systemic causes of high food prices. Secretary of Agriculture Schafer (or Administrator Fore) will attend a high-level dinner hosted by the Secretary-General to address causes and effects of food insecurity. Priorities for UNGA include furthering commitments made at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security in Rome in June and the G8 in July to develop a flexible international partnership to address food security.

m. Free Trade: The President is expected to attend a U.S.-hosted leaders meeting with Western Hemisphere countries with which we have free trade agreements. This will be an opportunity to take stock of the significant progress we have made in our Hemisphere through shared commitments to trade and investment liberalization, social inclusion, rule of law, and democracy. Leaders will agree at the meeting to increase our efforts to deepen our cooperation to ensure that the benefits of free trade and open investment are broadly shared throughout our societies.

15. (SBU) Themes for the Regular Session of the UNGA:

a. Human Rights and Human Dignity: Reftel STATE 93981 provides detail on the U.S.' priorities for Third Committee human rights priorities at this year's UNGA, which include resolutions on the human rights situations in Iran, Burma, and DPRK, as well as possible initiatives on Zimbabwe and certain thematic human rights issues such as freedom of expression, prisoners of conscience, and close monitoring of discussions on "defamation of religions." We face a number of tough votes on human rights resolutions for which we will need the support of capitals to win adoption. Our highest priority among the country-specific measures is the Canadian-sponsored resolution on human rights in Iran; last year, this resolution survived a no-action motion by only one vote. The above-mentioned cable requests posts to demarche at the highest appropriate level to solicit support for U.S. priority resolutions that will be offered, and to seek host government views on other important resolutions that may be offered in the upcoming fall session of the UNGA Third Committee.

b. Climate Change: The 14th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will take place in Poznan, Poland in December. With accelerated meetings and ongoing discussions on a future climate change agreement within the UNFCCC, climate change will likely feature in a variety of discussions at the UNGA. Further, a group of Small Island Developing States is pushing a request that the UNGA and the UNSC address the peace and security implications of climate change. Our goal is to gain support for our priorities in a climate change agreement, which include: Mitigation of global emissions through commitments from all major economies; Development and deployment of existing and new low carbon technologies; Encouraging incorporation of adaptation into national development strategies. UNGA deliberations and decisions should not pre-judge nor pre-empt negotiations under the Framework Convention.

c. Voting Blocs in the UN General Assembly: As key issues

of importance to U.S. policy interests, including Israel, human rights, development assistance, and the UN budget are increasingly brought to votes, one of our priorities is more effective influence on other countries to improve voting coincidence inside the UN with friendly nations. This will entail assertive approaches to G-77 and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries that have reasonably

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good relations with the U.S. but have a tendency to vote on resolutions based on bloc positions, often irrespective of resolution merits or individual countries' policy. Therefore, at this session the Department will launch the pilot phase of a long-term strategy in the UNGA to build coalitions and establish new voting patterns where U.S. and NAM or G-77 interests coincide. This pilot will involve a list of 17 countries. Posts in those countries will receive a separate cable requesting a demarche on the subject.

d. UN Reform: Our focus continues to be on reforms that improve oversight, accountability, and integrity. The Secretary-General's public statements emphasize these principles for the UN Secretariat, but he has not focused on specific proposals to improve performance among the UN's rank-and-file staff. In 2007, we launched our UN Transparency and Accountability Initiative at 22 other UN agencies to strengthen oversight and accountability, increase public access to information, establish a credible approach to ethical conduct and integrity, and increase financial transparency. While most of these agencies recognize the importance of our goals, much remains to be done.

e. UN 2008 - 2009 Budget Add-ons: We support a biennial budget that achieves maximum efficiency and the meaningful ordering of priorities in the UN's program of work. We intend to work to limit the level of real budget growth that would result from approval of the proposed add-ons and to impose discipline over the budget process, continuing to object to the piecemeal approach to budgeting.

f. UN Security Council Reform: In the 63rd session, the main topic of discussion will be launching inter-governmental negotiations outside the framework of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG). A number of Member States, led by the G-4 (Brazil, India, Germany, Japan) have grown frustrated with the inertia within the OEWG, which was tasked with establishing the frameworks and modalities prior to commencing negotiations. Our position is that any inter-government negotiations should proceed with pre-established rules and procedures, with consensus being the final objective. We will closely monitor progress on this issue to ensure that discussions occur within the broader context of UN reform. We support Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the UNSC.

Minimize considered.
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